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SUBJECT: BLACK-GREEN: GERMANY SEARCHES FOR NEW COALITION OPTIONS
FOLLOWING STATE ELECTIONS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

REF: HAMBURG 0007

1. SUMMARY. THE RECENT STATE ELECTIONS IN HAMBURG, LOWER SAXONY AND HESSE HAVE SOLIDIFIED THE EMERGENCE OF THE LEFT PARTY AND ESTABLISHED A FIVE-PARTY PRESENCE IN WESTERN GERMANY, FORCING POLITICIANS TO CONSIDER NON-TRADITIONAL COALITION OPTIONS. THE CDU AND GREENS ARE FOR THE FIRST TIME CONSIDERING FORMING A COALITION (A SO-CALLED "BLACK-GREEN" COALITION) IN HAMBURG, WHICH COULD OPEN THE DOOR FOR SUCH A POSSIBILITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. BLACK-GREEN COALITIONS HAVE GOVERNED SUCCESSFULLY AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL IN GERMANY FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THIS CABLE EXAMINES SUCH COALITIONS IN SOUTHWEST GERMANY, HIGHLIGHTING AREAS OF SUCCESSFUL BLACK-GREEN COOPERATION ON FINANCIAL, CIVIC AND FAMILY ISSUES, AS WELL AS UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCES IN AREAS SUCH AS THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY. END SUMMARY.

FRANKFURT: LOWER TAXES, BUT NO RUNWAY

2. THE MOST PROMINENT EXAMPLE OF A GOVERNING COALITION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (CDU) AND THE GREEN PARTY AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL IS IN GERMANY'S FINANCIAL CAPITAL, FRANKFURT. AFTER THE MAY 2006 MUNICIPAL ELECTION, THE CDU-CENTRIST PETRA ROTH BECAME LORD MAYOR IN THE SO-CALLED "COALITION OF REALISM" WITH THE GREEN PARTY. GARNERING 15.6% OF THE VOTE, THE MODERATE FRANKFURT GREENS FURTHER ESTABLISHED THEIR VOTER BASE IN AFFLUENT FRANKFURT AMONG YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND EDUCATED VOTERS AND DISTANCED THEIR PARTY FROM ITS LEFTIST PAST. CONSIDERED MORE CENTRIST AND FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE THAN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SPD), THE FRANKFURT GREENS HAVE WORKED WITH THE CDU TO DECREASE CORPORATE TAXES TO STIMULATE GROWTH AND FORM A CITIZENS' POLICE FORCE, AMONG OTHER INITIATIVES.

3. FRANKFURT'S BLACK-GREEN COALITION HAS BEEN LESS SUCCESSFUL, HOWEVER IN WORKING TOGETHER ON OTHER AREAS, SUCH AS ON THE ISSUE OF AIRPORT ENLARGEMENT. TO PRESERVE THE COALITION, THE GREENS AND THE CDU ABSTAINED ON THE ISSUE IN THE CITY COUNCIL BECAUSE OF A DISAGREEMENT OVER THE ISSUES OF NIGHT FLIGHTS. OTHER PARTIES VOTED TO TAKE THE STATE TO COURT OVER THE ISSUE, FORCING CDU FRANKFURT LORD MAYOR PETRA ROTH IN TO THE AWKWARD SITUATION OF BRINGING SUIT AGAINST A PLAN INITIATED BY THE CDU GOVERNMENT OF HESSE. WHILE THE GREENS AND THE CDU IN FRANKFURT ARE BOTH PRO-BUSINESS AND PRO-ENVIRONMENT, THE AIRPORT DISCUSSION REVEALS DIFFERING PRIORITIES, WHICH COULD CARRY OVER TO SIMILAR ISSUES AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS.

4. AT THE STATE LEVEL IN HESSE, BLACK-GREEN COOPERATION HAS BEEN STYMIED BY INTENSE ANIMOSITY BETWEEN CONSERVATIVE CDU MINISTER PRESIDENT ROLAND KOCH AND MODERATE GREEN PARTY LEADER TAREK AL-WAZIR. A SENIOR ADVISOR TO KOCH TOLD POLSPEC, HOWEVER, THAT HE

SEES MANY AREAS OF OVERLAP IN THE CONTENT OF BOTH PARTIES' PROGRAMS.

WHILE THE JANUARY 27 STATE ELECTION HAS YET TO PRODUCE A GOVERNMENT, THE POSSIBILITY REMAINS THAT THE CDU WILL FORM A GOVERNMENT WITH THE GREENS AND THE FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (FDP), IF KOCH STEPS ASIDE. MANY PUNDITS POINT TO FRANKFURT LORD MAYOR ROTH, A MODERATE CDU LEADER WITH A PROVEN HISTORY OF COOPERATION WITH THE GREENS, AS A POTENTIAL MINISTER PRESIDENT IN THIS SCENARIO.

BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG: MOVING TOWARDS BLACK-GREEN

15. THE CONSERVATIVE SOUTHERN STATE OF BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG GAVE GERMANY ITS FIRST GREEN LORD MAYOR IN 1996 IN THE CITY OF KONSTANZ. THE STATE ALSO HAS GREEN LORDS MAYOR IN MAJOR TOWNS SUCH AS FREIBURG, TUEBINGEN AND MUEHLACKER. WHILE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG HAS NO COALITION SYSTEM AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL, THE MODERATE GREEN LORDS MAYOR WORK CLOSELY WITH THE CDU -- THE STATE'S DOMINANT PARTY -- IN THE CITY COUNCILS. FOR EXAMPLE, FREIBURG'S LORD MAYOR DIETER SALOMON HAS ALLIED HIMSELF WITH THE CDU IN HIS EFFORT TO BALANCE THE BUDGET AND SELL OFF CITY-OWNED HOUSING. BOTH SALOMON AND HIS TUEBINGEN COUNTERPART, BORIS PALMER, ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR PRAGMATIC, MODERATE POLITICS, EARNING THEM THE RESPECT OF THE CDU AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. IN THE STATE CAPITAL OF STUTTGART, THE GREEN MAYORAL CANDIDATE ACTUALLY WITHDREW FROM THE 2005 ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO ENDORSE HIS CDU COMPETITOR, WOLFGANG SHUSTER.

16. AFTER THE LAST STATE ELECTION IN 2006, THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG CDU MET TWICE WITH THE GREENS BEFORE SETTLING ON A COALITION WITH ITS TRADITIONAL ALLY, THE FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (FDP). MINISTER PRESIDENT GUENTHER OETTINGER STANDS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CDU ON SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, MAKING HIM AN APPEALING PARTNER FOR THE GREENS. POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE CONVINCED THAT A BLACK-GREEN GOVERNMENT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME IN THAT STATE. A BLACK-GREEN COALITION AT THE STATE LEVEL, HOWEVER, WOULD FACE MORE COMPLEX CHALLENGES THAN AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL, FOR EXAMPLE, THE DECOMMISSIONING OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS. WHILE THE NATIONAL CDU IS

CURRENTLY MOVING FORWARD WITH DECOMMISSIONING AS PART OF ITS COALITION AGREEMENT WITH THE SPD, STATE-LEVEL POLITICIANS, INCLUDING OETTINGER, HAVE ARGUED THAT THIS POLICY MUST BE REVISITED IN ORDER TO MEET GERMANY'S ENERGY NEEDS.

17. COMMENT. A BLACK-GREEN COALITION IN HAMBURG WOULD PROVIDE A TESTING GROUND FOR WHAT MANY SEE AS A PROMISING COALITION OPTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN 2009. WITH THE RISING POPULARITY OF THE LEFT PARTY, THE TWO TRADITIONAL COALITION PARTNERSHIPS -- THE CDU WITH THE FDP AND THE SPD WITH THE GREENS -- NO LONGER YIELD MAJORITIES. THE EXPERIENCES IN HESSE AND BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG HIGHLIGHT AREAS WHERE MODERATE CDU AND GREEN POLITICIANS HAVE WORKED TOGETHER WITH SOME SUCCESS. COOPERATION AT A HIGHER LEVEL WILL REQUIRE BOTH SIDES TO MOVE TO THE MIDDLE, BUT SERIOUS COMPROMISES WILL ALSO BE NEEDED ON ISSUES SUCH AS ENERGY, FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, WHERE THE TWO PARTIES DO NOT ALWAYS SEE EYE TO EYE.

18. THIS CABLE HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH EMBASSY BERLIN AND CONSULATE GENERAL HAMBURG.
POWELL